



The Secretary of Energy
Washington, DC 20585

May 3, 2002

The Honorable Edward J. Markey
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515-2107

Dear Representative Markey:

This is in response to your January 23, 2002, letter expressing concern about the conditions of safeguards and security in the Department of Energy's (DOE) nuclear weapons complex.

Let me assure you that I consider this Department's responsibilities to national security to be my number one priority. Throughout the Department and the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), we take very seriously this responsibility for safeguards and security of our complex. The September 11 attacks have only strengthened our resolve. In addition to our internal commitment to facility safeguards and security, DOE has independent inspection teams that review the state of readiness at our facilities. Mr. Glenn Podonsky, Director of the Office of Independent Oversight and Performance Assurance, provides continual updates on security conditions at our sites.

We have taken several steps to meet increased security challenges since September 11. We are refining our risk management approach, combining this approach with strong line management accountability and effective independent oversight and continually searching for and implementing new and better security tools and techniques.

A key initiative is the NNSA's establishment of the Combating Terrorism Task Force a week after the September attacks. The Task Force coordinated a systematic and critical review of 12 key areas of NNSA security and operational responsibilities, using lessons learned from September 11. Functional Working Groups formed under the Task Force reviewed these areas with a view toward improving the posture of NNSA to protect our own assets, to carry out our mission in a heightened security environment, and to make the capabilities of the NNSA available to the war on terrorism and homeland defense. Among the technical areas reviewed were: specific, potential revisions to the security Design Basis Threat; our ability to protect NNSA assets, operations and personnel, as well as the public health and safety of the communities in which we operate; the NNSA's capabilities to support overall U.S. response to terrorist events; the preparation of a catalog of our scientific and technical solutions to counter the changing threats to U.S. national security; and our support to international



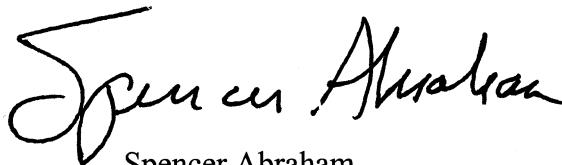
nonproliferation and materials protection programs. A number of near- and mid-term recommendations were made, many of which have already been implemented or are in the process of being implemented. Other recommendations are being evaluated against resource requirements and program priorities.

I welcome serious inquiries into the Department's security practices. I hope through this response and any resulting dialogue that I can reassure you that our weapons complex remains safe and secure and the protection systems at our sites are robust, reliable, and responsive to evolving security challenges.

We have compiled detailed responses to each of your questions. The unclassified responses, listed by corresponding page and question number in your letter, are provided in the unclassified enclosure. A number of the responses to your questions contain classified information. The classified responses have been reserved for you at the Forrestal building and will be made readily available to you or a member of your staff, at your convenience. Please contact Mr. Rob Hood, NNSA Congressional Affairs Officer, at (202) 586-7381, to arrange for review of the classified documents.

If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me or Mr. Dan R. Brouillette, Assistant Secretary for Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs, at (202) 586-5450.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Spencer Abraham". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Spencer" being more prominent than the last name "Abraham".

Spencer Abraham

Enclosure:

Unclassified responses to Representative Markey's January 23, 2002, letter

cc:

The Honorable W. J. "Billy" Tauzin
Chairman, Committee on Energy and Commerce